



*United States Attorney
Southern District of New York*

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
MAY 2, 2003

CONTACT: U.S. ATTORNEY'S OFFICE
MARVIN SMILON, HERBERT HADAD,
MICHAEL KULSTAD
PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICE
(212) 637-2600

**U.S. SENTENCES EX-TAXI DRIVER TO 21 MONTHS IN JAIL
IN CREDIT CARD, SOCIAL SECURITY FRAUD SCHEME**

JAMES B. COMEY, the United States Attorney for the Southern District of New York, and ROSE GILL HEARN, the Commissioner of the New York City Department of Investigation, announced that HISHAM AMER, who pled guilty to charges of credit card fraud and Social Security fraud in December 2002, was sentenced today by United States District Judge MICHAEL B. MUKASEY to 21 months in prison.

According to the criminal Complaint filed in this case in January 2001, the superseding Indictment returned against AMER, and a stipulation the parties entered into concerning facts relevant to sentencing, AMER obtained numerous forms of New York State identification under various fake names, including the names "Hassan Ali" and "Hisham E. Saedah." According to the charges and the stipulated facts, AMER then used these and other identities to apply for and obtain more than 80 credit and charge cards in various names. Amer applied for the vast majority of

these cards using fraudulent Social Security numbers, according to the charges. The parties agreed at sentencing that the Social Security numbers AMER used to open many of his credit and charge accounts included Social Security numbers that had been assigned to other people and two Social Security numbers that Amer applied for in names other than his true name.

After obtaining more than 80 accounts, the parties agreed that AMER then ran up substantial charges on nearly 30 of the credit and charge cards and then failed to make payments, causing the issuing banks and credit card companies to place AMER's accounts in default status. AMER's conduct caused losses of more than \$400,000 to numerous banks and credit card companies, according to the charges and the stipulation the parties entered into.

Judge MUKASEY ordered AMER to pay more than \$400,000 in restitution to the various victims of his scheme.

AMER, 41, resides in Brooklyn, New York.

Mr. COMEY praised the investigative efforts of the New York City Department of Investigation, the United States Social Security Administration – Office of Inspector General, and the United States Postal Inspection Service, and thanked the Office of the Inspector General of the New York State Workers' Compensation Board for its assistance in the investigation.

Assistant United States Attorney JONATHAN S. ABERNETHY is in charge of the prosecution.